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Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation
Legislative Hearing on HR 4182
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In lieu of the passage of HR 4029, HR4182 would be very favorably received by the local communities and would allow the current economies to endure, visitors to remain constant, historical structures and locations to remain accessible and local resident traditions to carry on.

As noted in my testimony on HR4029 the historical prevalence of the river and land is what locals believe has been typically forgotten since the creation of the Ozark National Scenic Riverway.. Briefly allow me to highlight;

- Historical structures allowed to decline or be demolished
- Historical farm fields grown up and not remain as “pastoral settings”
- Historic roads, trails and river accesses closed
- Folk lore presentations discontinued
- Primitive camp sites closed
- Cemeteries not maintained

Then, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall and the original authors who wrote the 1964 legislation to establish the park used the words conservation, preservation and recreation for all. The intention of the word preservation was to preserve the history of the original inhabitants and their activities, as well as preservation of the river and wildlife.

The addition of the wording “preservation of historical activities” to current policy and giving it the same weight in determining management decisions would improve the current policy.

HR 4182 requires the National Park Service personnel to manage the Ozark National Scenic Riverway as it is currently being managed and to abide by the 1984 General Management Plan. The 1984 plan would continue to allow the horseback riders to continue the tradition of riding in the Ozarks, river accesses would remain open for all to enjoy, traditional recreation activities such as fishing, gigging, boating, canoeing, kayaking and swimming would all continue. River baptisms would be allowed to continue without restriction.

The inclusion that the National Park Service prohibit the addition of any land within the Ozark National Scenic Riverway boundary from being included in such initiatives as the recent “National Blueway” or past “Biosphere”, and the requirement that National Park Service personnel not allowed to designate a “wilderness area” without the proper legislation from Congress is appreciated.

If the Ozark National Scenic Riverway and the National Park personnel would abide by the 1984 General Management Plan, implement and move forward the with proposed improvements to the park and allow for the current policy to remain the rule, the Ozark National Scenic Riverway would continue to provide traditional river experiences to the visitors and local residents.

These rivers have truly been the lifeblood of the communities that grew up around them. These people developed a spirit along with a compassionate belief in assisting our neighbors and

welcoming visitors. Personally and professionally Ozark people have attended to the needs of visitors for generations and this return to the original purpose of the creation of the Ozark National Scenic Riverway would free local businesses and organizations to better do so again.

HR4182 Continued – Lack of 1984 GMP Implementation

In the 1984 General Management Plan the NPS included commitments and policy to improvements to the park many of which have yet to be seen proving yet again the NPS is not a friend to the region but is directed by people who do not live in nor care about the communities that it is encompassed by.

- 1) The farms along the rivers had been allowed to grow up and become brush thickets. The 1984 plan promised to maintain many of the open fields in various stages of succession-for aesthetic benefit and to provide diversification favorable to wildlife; this was promised in the original plan as well, siting “pastoral settings” of the way the land was farmed before it became a park as an important visitor experience, however not until the lower river area was recently developed for the new elk being restored by the Missouri Dept of Conservation was the proposed fields manicured and revitalized. This was done at the expense of the Missouri tax payer.
- 2) The plan states that cultural resources will be vigilantly maintained and protected, however sites like the Lower Parker School, one of the last one-room school houses in Dent County is allowed to deteriorate. Cardareva School House is demolished and native rock removed, cemeteries are left in disarray, Button Rock School House continues to decline. I would also like to note that cultural experiences refers to camp locations, which often are located on an old family farm, visited by descendants and many of these have been closed off with large boulders prohibiting use. The NPS also attempted to halt river baptisms last year, a 200 year tradition in the Ozarks and I hardly believe that could be considered protecting the cultural resources of the area.
- 3) The plan encourages and supports efforts to stimulate study of regional folk life. We do not believe this has been done and is proven by the fact that park personnel were willing to allow several events that promote the introduction and exposure of local folk life to expire.
- 4) Litter was addressed in the plan and noted that existing cleanup program continues to include summer cleaning crews and an annual NPS/Canoe Concessioner cleanup day in March. To our knowledge this does not exist or is not publicized to allow for assistance by the locals. The only cleanup day events currently noted are done by the Missouri Stream Team and the Ozark Heritage Project, without the assistance of NPS personnel. As for summer cleaning crews, trash pickup was discontinued for many camping areas and providing trash bags was eliminated.
- 6) Campground to be built along with an 200 person amphitheater to be built at Aker’s was never built, nor the improvements at Powder Mill and the living demonstrations Blacksmithing, Horseshoeing and Sorghum Making have ceased; widening of the road to lower access at Log Yard and install concrete boat ramp, were never done. The plan also speaks of improvements at Jerk Tail and now that access is being threatened with closure and a 200 seat amphitheater to be constructed at Big Spring, also not completed.

These are all projects and improvements put forth in the 1984 GMP but have yet to be implemented. These need to be addressed as to why the commitments were not followed through on and the point needs to be made of their negative impact on the economies in the area and the level of accountability the leadership of the NPS has shown.